

produced this Second Edition in 2008. This new edition has been substantially edited from the previous edition and expanded to address other issues of relevance and interest. Though none of the topics is dealt with in great detail, as found in other botanical texts, it is indeed a very readable book with a wealth of information that provides a lovely bridge between theoretical botany and practical horticulture. In a relatively easy manner, the book covers the basic structures and functions of plants, nomenclature and genetics, environmental factors affecting growth, methods of propagation and production, pest and disease control and post-harvest management and storage. Furthermore, concerns about diversity, sustainability, conservation and climate are also dealt with. Consisting of 20 chapters, the book is well laid out with helpful figures and tables, a brief up-to-date list for further reading at the end of each chapter, and a very useful glossary at the end of the book. Altogether, the style and appearance of the book is very pleasing.

The editors and contributors have achieved what they set out to do by providing comprehensive information on the “science” behind growing plants. This book will certainly be a useful addition to any University library, and perhaps even secondary school libraries may well make use of it. Though it is not a “gardening book” as such, it would appeal to growers and plant enthusiasts who are interested in deepening their understanding of botany and horticulture.

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**Medicinal Plants of South Africa (2nd Edition), Ben-Erik Van Wyk, Bosch Van Oudtshoorn and Nigel Gericke (Eds), 2009, Briza Publications, PO Box 56569, Arcadia 0007, Pretoria, South Africa, Price: R329,00 Hard cover, 336 pages including more than 150 photographs, ISBN 978-1-875093-37-3, E-mail: [books@briza.co.za](mailto:books@briza.co.za), Website: [www.briza.co.za](http://www.briza.co.za)**

The first edition of this book, published as a photographic guide to the most commonly used and best known plant medicines of South Africa, was extremely popular with a wide range of the South African population. The original edition included botanical aspects of the plants used, their main traditional uses and, where available, their active components.

Ethnobotany is now a very popular research topic in South Africa, and greater use is currently being made in terms of natural plants than ever before. The current second edition took note of the excellent research that has been done on ethnopharmacological aspects in relation to indigenous plants. The various entries on more than 150 medicinal plants were updated with respect to plant description, plant parts used, medicinal properties preparation and dosage, the active ingredients and their pharmacological effects. All this valuable data is augmented by distribution maps of the plants and diagrams of the chemical structure of the plant products.

Valuable data on cultural aspects of healing and methods of plant collection, their storage, methods of preparation and modes of administration adds additional value to this very pleasing book. This volume should further increase the intensity of research in the field of traditional medicine in South Africa.

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